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ABSTRACT

Since the early 1980's, the primary institutional mission of Mount Hood Community College (MHCC) in Gresham, Oregon, has been identified as student success. Toward that end, the college has instituted an ongoing systematic review of instructional program improvement and implemented institutional strategic planning directly linked to budget development. In addition, an office of staff and organizational development was established in 1986 which currently conducts 2-week programs of learning activities for faculty and ongoing development programs for managers and support staff. To help assess student success, MHCC has collected student "intent" data upon entry and on a term-by-term basis since 1983, focussing on educational and career goals, and intended duration at MHCC. Also, the college instituted a mandatory assessment and placement program in 1984 to enhance the prospects of student success. At the core of MHCC's institutional effectiveness assessment is the program review process, conducted on an annual basis and utilizing such quantitative and qualitative indicators as student demand, job placement, transfer success, the local employment outlook, and staff development. Results of program review activities are incorporated into the annual strategic planning process, a participatory effort which engenders community dialogue and which provides the basis for the budget development process. Finally, as part of MHCC's mission review process in 1989-90, a "mission to measurement" document was developed, designed to emphasize the institutional commitment to document outcomes and improve student success. MHCC's mission statement and flow charts depicting student success strategies and planning and resources allocation processes are included. (PAA)

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Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success

Dr. Paul E. Kreider
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MHCC PUBLICATIONS ON INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS

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Institutional Effectiveness

and Student Success

March 1993

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Mt. Hood Community College
Gresham, Oregon

Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success

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Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success

March 1993

DEAR COLLEAGUES:

Students enroll at MHCC for a variety of purposes and duration, and it is important that the college respect individual goals and continue to provide quality in all programs and services. This monograph is the first in a planned series we intend to publish over the next few years. The purpose is threefold: (1) capture and document the history and development of the various efforts undertaken over the past 10-12 years; (2) share our experiences both within the MHCC family and with our colleagues in the community college movement; and (3) identify and prepare for the challenges that await us as we seek to craft an even more effective organization. This particular document offers a comprehensive overview of the programs and processes implemented at MHCC to assure student success.

Although we can point to past accomplishments with pride, we must continue to look to the future. The future is driven by a sound mission statement supported by effective institutional processes and the ability to clearly demonstrate quality educational outcomes. To this end we must all be involved and committed to a shared vision. Although individuals understand the purpose and value of their own programs or departments, it is more difficult to relate one's own activities to other divisions and departments and the college as a whole. This document has been prepared in an effort to assist you in making these connections.

Dr. Paul E. Kreider, President, Mt. Hood Community College

THE BASIS OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

An active, committed and caring college community, with an appropriate mission statement and effective institutional processes, provides the foundation upon which a strong institutional effectiveness program can be initiated and sustained. It is also critical that valid and accurate information should be accessible to and easily understood by all members of the college community. Such information should relate to the college's mission, provide an accounting of institutional decisions and serve as a basis for improvement and future planning. Although specific indicators will vary with local circumstances, all community colleges should be able to provide evidence and documentation of outcomes derived from their mission ... from Policy Statement on Institutional Effectiveness, American Association of Community Colleges, April 1992 .

STUDENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES AT MHCC: A HISTORY

Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) serves a population of over 215,000 in the suburban area east of the city of Portland, Oregon. The college enrolls almost 30,000 different individuals in a given academic year, yielding approximately 6,500 FTE. Originally a rural area, the district has experienced significant population growth along with economic development and diversification. The district also is becoming more diverse in the ethnic and socio-economic profile of the population. Hispanics now account for the fastest growing segment of the population.

From its earliest years, MHCC has assessed its effectiveness, but in increasingly more formal ways over the past ten years. Step by step, MHCC has implemented processes and practices designed to support an integrated approach to organizational effectiveness. As a harbinger of the 1992 American Association of Community Colleges (AACC, formerly AACJC) policy statement on effectiveness, MHCC, in the early 1980s, articulated its primary institutional purpose as student success. The college went on to put in place an ongoing, systematic review of instructional program improvement and implemented institutional strategic planning and assessment directly linked to budget development. In 1986 an office of staff and organization development was established to ensure learning

opportunities for all staff and to provide support and momentum for the development of the whole institution as a system committed to student success. All of these activities are bound together with ongoing institutional research and information flow.

Given the diversity of students attending a community college, assessing student success is predicated on knowing students' reasons for attending. Since 1983 MHCC has been systematically collecting student "intent" data upon entry and throughout the students' attendance (i.e., the intent data is updated on a term-by-term basis). The intent items include educational goal (a single course, two-year degree, etc.), planned duration (one term, two years, etc.), and ultimate goal (job/career, upgrade skills, personal enrichment, etc.).

The "open-door" philosophy of the community college movement raises perhaps the key issue in efforts to promote and to assess student success, for a majority of entering community college students lack the basic skills in reading, writing and/or mathematics to succeed in college-level studies. MHCC addressed this issue in 1984 with establishment of Guided Studies, a mandatory assessment and placement program. Evaluation of this program, now replicated at an increasing number of community colleges, shows that mandatory testing and placement significantly enhances the prospects for student success.

Based on data collected upon student entry, MHCC attempts to track and to monitor student success on an ongoing basis, including the relation of student success to student intentions. This also includes student follow-up studies, which focus explicitly on subsequent employment or transfer to a four-year institution. Such studies document the placement rates for instructional programs as well as other student outcomes.

In addition to the broad entrance and outcome assessments described above, individual departments and programs employ a variety of strategies for enhancing and assessing student progress. These strategies range from further course-specific placement requirements to competency-based programs. In turn, program specific assessments are subject to the summative evaluations conducted through student follow-up.

INSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES: SUSTAINING STUDENT SUCCESS STRATEGIES

MHCC's student success efforts are supported by a systematic program review and improvement process, strategic planning and resource allocation processes, and a comprehensive program for staff and organization development.

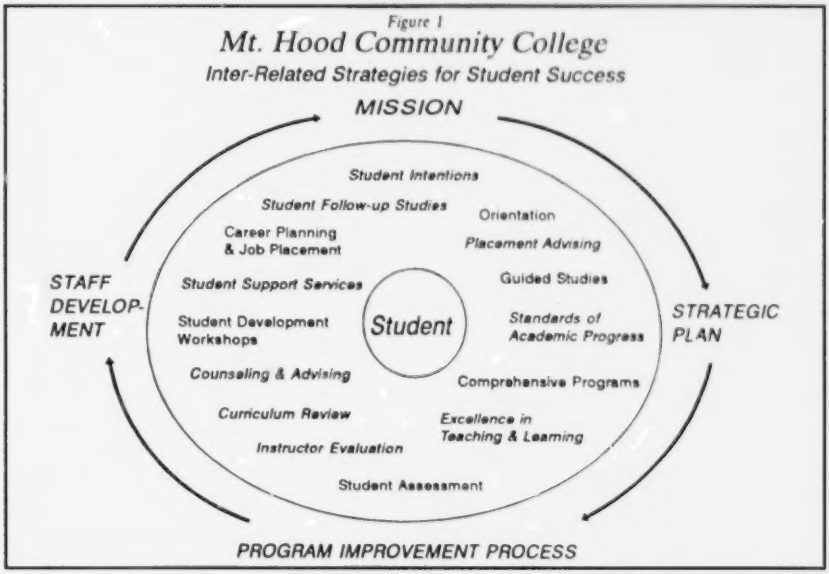


Figure 1. "Interrelated Strategies for Student Success," depicts the numerous programs and processes implemented over the years in support of student success. The student is the center of all college activity, and student success can be influenced by the quality and integrity of the various support services and programs depicted. At the outer edge are institutional processes such as strategic planning and program improvement (i.e., assessment). Planning and assessment are now more central to institutional life by integrating on-going professional development as part of the particular process. If staff members can internalize planning and assessment and make the connections between those processes and their daily work, then both the teaching and learning process and planning and assessment activities are enriched.

Program Improvement Process

At the core of MHCC efforts to assess institutional effectiveness is the program improvement process. This effort, in turn, is built primarily on student outcomes. The nineteen factors used in this annual process follow (application of a particular factor varies by type of program or discipline):

- student demand
- job placement and transfer success
- employment outlook
- instructional cost effectiveness
- facility requirements
- equipment/supplies requirements
- revenue projections
- course retention
- student success by course
- retention in sequential courses
- discipline/program retention
- completion
- staff development
- quality of the curriculum
- service to students from other disciplines
- instructional alternatives within the college

THE CONSORTIUM FOR INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND STUDENT SUCCESS IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

MHCC's program has positioned the college to provide leadership for and to respond proactively to the "national assessment and effectiveness movement." One example of this role is seen in the efforts of the president, Dr. Paul Kreider, to establish and to provide the national headquarters for The Consortium for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success in the Community College. This organization, founded in 1988 and dedicated to the promotion of exemplary research and practice in the area of assessment and effectiveness, has over 75 member colleges and will hold its fifth annual summer institute in June 1993. The Consortium is affiliated with the AACC and is now located at Macomb Community College in Michigan under the leadership of Dr. Albert Lorenzo.

- instructional alternatives at other institutions
- comprehensiveness/balance in instructional offerings
- service to the community

These factors represent a mix of quantitative and qualitative indicators of program effectiveness. Individual program results are monitored on an annual basis and, if trends suggest that a program is developing problems, an in-depth review is conducted.

Results from the program improvement process are then incorporated within the annual strategic planning process. In turn, the strategic plan provides the basis for the budget development process. Since the program improvement process addresses only instructional areas, the college is now looking at improvement processes for support services. Pilot projects are underway which apply total quality management techniques to service operations.

Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation

The strategic plan provides documentation of the college's goals and objectives. Combined with other activities and documents, the strategic plan represents a key part of an overall institutional effectiveness program. MHCC's strategic plan chronicles current conditions and highlights planned actions for the coming years. The plan is the result of a series of collaborative meetings at a variety of levels and intensities among faculty, support staff, management and student leaders. The plan also reflects community concerns and aspirations via professional/technical program advisory committees, institutional partnerships, other external linkages, and environmental scanning.

The primary value of strategic planning is found in the process. Emphasis is on understanding the present and creating the future which is documented through an action plan that includes: a reiteration of institutional philosophy; an analysis of current conditions; and a detail of strategic changes that will be implemented within available or additional resources.

Area plans are developed at the program and departmental level. Summaries are then created across the divisions and primary administrative units. To help plan developers, resource materials are provided which include

assessment results from the prior planning cycle, program improvement process findings, and various reports dealing with environmental scanning, enrollment trends, and student outcomes.

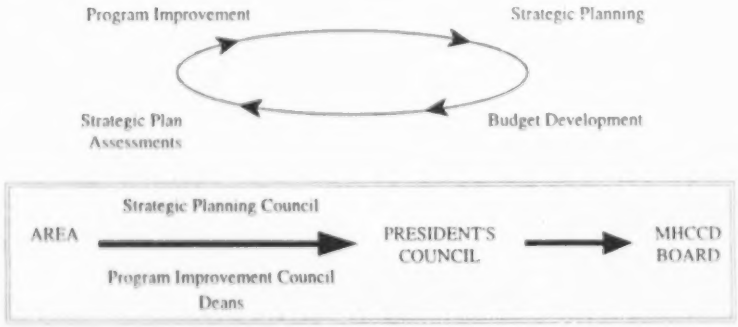
A strategic planning council, representing all campus constituencies, meets and reviews all the area plans. The council members conduct an in-depth analysis of the plans in an effort to insure the college mission is central in planning, to identify future directions and to develop strategies for accomplishing institutional objectives. In the process of its review, the council prepares recommendations for the college's administration and board. Figure 2 describes the annual processes of program improvement, strategic planning and budget development. In the spring of each year, the council coordinates an assessment process in which each area of the college evaluates progress achieved in meeting their objectives.

The MHCC strategic planning process is a participatory and an information-rich process which engenders community dialogue and shapes the outcomes of that interaction. These efforts have assisted in forging better links with other institutional processes and in clarifying the vision guiding the college toward a designed and desired future.

Figure 2

Mt. Hood Community College District

Strategic Planning, Budget Development & Program Improvement Processes



Staff and Organization Development

Research conducted at MHCC, as well as general research literature, clearly demonstrates that the primary factor in student success is the quality and intensity of student-faculty-staff interactions. The college has designed processes to foster an environment in which these interactions can be maximized. Success in these efforts is validated through student outcomes assessment.

Institutional mission, strategic planning and other institutional processes would be quite meaningless without a primary consideration of the staff. Faculty and staff are the "heartbeat" of the system, the agents of student success.

Staff members form an interrelated network of support, teaching, learning and service for the student and the student's success. It follows that students are best able to succeed when the staff is vital and enthusiastic about continuous improvement. Such vitality occurs when every staff member has easy access to support, information and learning opportunities. Continuous staff development across all areas and levels builds self-confidence and a sense of purpose in the organization.

Support staff are especially critical in assisting students to navigate the various procedures involved with enrollment - from registration, to applying for financial aid, to making arrangements for payment. Without dedicated and caring support staff, many students would never reach the classroom, let alone achieve their educational goals.

At MHCC the office of staff and organization development supports learning within the organization. When first established, the office conducted a survey of faculty perceptions about professional development, what faculty believed it to be, what they wanted it to be, and the degree to which they felt the organization supported and encouraged them to grow, change, and flourish. Survey results were enhanced by focus group sessions, and all the data were used to begin strengthening the faculty development program and practices. Priorities for professional development now are an integral part of the strategic planning process. This directly links learning and development with the institution's capacity for successfully creating the future. Professional development is documented by instructor evaluation and the program improvement review. Strengthening professional staff development throughout the system, and as part of the system, also directly links staff learning to institutional purpose — student success, student outcomes and assessment.

Within such an environment, it becomes perfectly natural and logical to give considerable focus to the quality of teaching and learning and to have faculty actively involved in assessing not only their students' performances but their own professional effectiveness as well.

MHCC offers an array of staff development opportunities including a structured Teaching Improvement Process (TIP), Small Group Instructional Diagnosis, and classroom research. An intensive two-week program of learning activities is provided annually prior to the beginning of classes. Professional development opportunities are offered on an ongoing basis and specifically designed to serve the needs of managers and support staff.

Currently a "student success strategies" team is helping build a plan for a teaching and learning center (TLC) to serve all staff . This dream is now integrated in the strategic planning and budget development processes. Most importantly, the planned teaching and learning center will provide learning opportunities for not only faculty but administrators and support staff as well — again strengthening the concept of a learning organization.

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of Mt. Hood Community College to fulfill the following commitments:

MHCC shall provide access to technological education and training, a wide variety of transfer programs, developmental education and comprehensive community services.

MHCC shall strive to help students discover their own potential, respect the uniqueness of others, and develop ethical values.

MHCC shall provide enthusiastic and dedicated instruction to students of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds.

MHCC shall collaborate with agencies, organizations and businesses to best serve students and the community and to be responsive to the realities and demands of a changing world.

As part of the global community, **MHCC** shall cultivate international understanding through education and partnerships.

MHCC shall be a community of caring individuals who strive for excellence in all facets of college life.

MISSION TO MEASUREMENT

Given changes occurring within MHCC as well as in the external environment, the college community engaged in a review of its mission statement during 1989-90. This review included Futures Forum II in December 1989, at which eighty-five persons, including staff, students and board members, gathered to compile themes and draft sample mission statements. The mission review process continued throughout the year, culminating in a revised mission statement adopted by the district board in July 1990.

Most recently the integration of teaching effectiveness, student outcomes, and institutional mission has been further enhanced by development of a "mission to measurement" document. In the fall of 1990, Dr. Kreider and the MHCCD Board circulated a draft document which articulated an institutional effectiveness program derived from MHCC's recently completed new mission statement. Drawing on mission themes, the document identified examples of programs and practices reflecting each theme, expected outcomes, and performance measures. This institutional initiative coincided with Dr. Kreider's efforts at the national level as a member of the AACC Board, chair of the AACC Board Committee on Education Policy and Research, and chair of the AACC affiliate, The Consortium for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success in the Community College. Produced by these bodies and through Dr. Kreider's leadership was the recently adopted AACC Policy Statement on Institutional Effectiveness.

In Oregon, the mission to measurement effort also is reflected in the current work of the Commissioner's Task Force on Accountability. The task force recently completed a project to identify "indicators" of institutional effectiveness for use on a statewide basis and in response to state level accountability.

The goal of these local, state and national efforts is to demonstrate effectiveness and accountability while also creating a model of operation characterized by continuous improvement.

The Strategic Planning Council has continued to refine MHCC's mission to measurement document guided by the following questions:

- What is our purpose? (mission/mission themes)
- What do we do to fulfill our purpose? (practices/processes)
- What results do we expect when we do what we do? (expected outcomes)
- How do we know when we have achieved results? (performance)
- How do we know when our results are effective? (measurement)

The mission to measurement document has been used in several ways. It is used as part of the strategic planning annual report to show how the college's mission is supported in practice and planning. A second use includes it as part of the strategic planning process as organizational information for all planning units. The ultimate purpose is to understand, document and evaluate institutional effectiveness. Quite simply, how do we know when we are effective? Mission is accomplished through appropriate practices and then demonstrated through outcomes and performance measures. The MHCC document identifies relevant variables proposed by the staff in the study of effectiveness. Further work will require deeper consideration of each variable as a true indicator of effectiveness. For example, high enrollment may suggest that marketing efforts are effective and that the college is accessible to large numbers of persons. It may mean that programs are effective. It also may mean none of these things and merely indicate that generally there is a high demand for education and training in the community. The challenge is to learn how to relate measurement strategies to effectiveness.

Finally, effectiveness is relative to established standards. Should standards be set in relation to other community colleges? Are we comparing the current status to a past timeframe? If institutional standards have been defined, is it understood how to fulfill them, interpret, access and review

INDICATORS OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Not some but all of the 1992 graduates in four MHCC Allied Health programs passed their state licensure exams, exceeding the national average for the number of students passing the exams by as much as 15 percent. The top scores earned by the students year after year speak to the hard work of the students and especially to the caring, dedicated faculty. The instructors are committed to ensuring that the curriculum is current, teaching methods meet students' needs, and that students receive the clinical experience so important to giving relevance to what is learned in the classroom. Success in licensure exams is also a key indicator in the Allied Health Division's mission to measurement statement.

them? Do we truly know how to implement our mission?

In the annual assessment of the strategic plan, areas were asked to document further how current practices fulfill the mission. The "mission to measurement" process is building a collegewide consciousness of the interrelatedness of mission, practices, assessment and effectiveness. Examples include:

The college board and president focus on scope and comprehensiveness of programs and services; summative evaluation based on student progress rates and indicators of success such as placement; and access to life-long learning opportunities.

Language & Literature Division: The content of selected composition courses has been designed particularly to advantage students seeking technological education and training. Measurement strategy includes survey of employers to see if students are able to communicate effectively.

Mathematics Division: As part of national mathematics reform effort, the division has implemented comprehensive revision of curriculum and introduced calculator-based mathematics, including placement testing. The new placement process has resulted in students being more accurately positioned in appropriate mathematics classes and/or mathematics dependent programs.

Admissions and Records: As a first phase or level evaluation, this department reviews service level: almost 30,000 students are registered each year; more than 1,800 applications are received for limited and restricted entry programs; over 500 inquiries are processed each month, and more than 1,000 international applications are requested and mailed each year.

Developmental Education: Success in subsequent college level coursework is the primary indicator for evaluating reading, writing and study skills courses.

> In the **Administrative Services area**, the cashiering department evaluates process for acceptance of payments by length of lines and quality of service-the standard is friendly, fast, caring, accurate.

Creating the "mission to measurement" report has moved the college community closer to integrating mission and planning and has helped all staff to think more specifically about institutional effectiveness. These are steps in the right direction. The effort has created a good foundation for continuing discussion and fulfilling commitment to effectively serve students, staff and community.

In summary, MHCC has worked hard to ensure and assess institutional effectiveness and student success. The annual processes implemented and refined over the past eight years do require a high degree of participation and commitment of time and resources. However, the effort has been worth the cost, for it has brought MHCC to new heights of excellence as a learning organization in fulfilling the institutional mission.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

As development of MHCC's institutional effectiveness program continues, the primary focus must remain the success of students. However, in this effort it also is important to learn to incorporate and utilize the increasing array of external accountability mandates. These include new accreditation standards and federal and state reporting requirements. The state of Oregon has initiated an ambitious educational reform effort designed to achieve a globally competitive work force by the year 2010 (Oregon Benchmarks). Oregon community colleges are viewed as central to this effort, working in cooperation with other state agencies, educational providers and the private sector. The Oregon Legislature has appropriated special funds and expects accountability from those entities receiving support.

If viewed as simply reporting requirements, unrelated to the teaching and learning process, external accountability will only become a burden requiring additional costs. This can be avoided if external requirements can be harnessed to internal processes, and thus strengthen evaluation efforts.

The common theme across the new accountability requirements is the demonstration of student learning outcomes, not just at the institutional or program level, but at the individual student and course level. To meet these requirements will involve the individual faculty member far more than in the

past. Various techniques of assessment can be used, but each faculty member will have to decide which techniques are most appropriate for the specific discipline. If done with care and creativity, these new and additional assessment techniques will ensure even greater student success.

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